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The following article, which originally appeared in the New Bedford Mercury, we print by request, as a confirmation of the conclusions to which Colonel Higginson has been led by his recent trial of a battalion of black troops under fire:—

The following is the testimony of an unwilling witness—a French soldier:

Lieutenant-General Baron Camphile de la Croix was a distinguished officer of the French Republican army, a part of which was detached by Bonaparte, under General Le Clerc (the husband of Pauline B.) to bring St. Domingo under French rule again. His "Memoires" are considered valuable, especially for their details of military operations.

He states that the blacks fought well, even in the early days of their insurrection, when they were a mere revolted crowd. At the first symptoms of hesitation on the part of the soldiers sent out to put them down, they would throw themselves with audacity upon the cannon, stuff their arms into them, and at any expense take them.

They never appeared as a crowd of excited people engaged in a revolt, but dispersed themselves in different bodies, each one of which had instructions to converge in such a way as to envelope the forces sent against them. When they were dispersed they still had constancy enough to remain under arms. The unorganized mulattoes in the south of St. Domingo also knew how to gain advantages. On the 1st and 2d of September, 1791, a body of a hundred Flibustiers and 200 French troops of the line, with several pieces of cannon, was routed at daybreak, at the end of a successful march, by a sustained fire of the mulattoes, of muskets alone, leaving 100 dead and wounded.

In a subsequent action, when a mulatto General was on the point of being overthrown by the fire of 20 pieces of artillery, he was saved by a flank movement of another division of mulattoes, who threw themselves upon the pieces with perfect abandonment, extinguishing the fire, and carried off one piece.

By turns victorious and defeated, the mulattoes never ceased to keep an armed corps in the field, in the interest of their cause.

The defile, called the Platona, was attacked by three columns of French troops, numbering more than 15,000 men, Aug. 6, 1792. The first column, not being supported at the expected moment, wavered. It was composed of mulattoes under Rigaud (the mulattoes fighting against the blacks oftener than with them). It was annihilated, though supported by regular troops. The second column was a little later; it was also supported by veteran troops from the Army of the Rhine. It was received as the French and Bavarians were received by the Swiss and Tyrolese: a lively musketry fire so decimated it, that it was forced to retire. Then it was vigorously pursued, and lost 100 men, a lieutenant-colonel and four officers.

The third column, with one piece of artillery, which was probably an incumbrance, hearing of these checks, attempted to retreat in order. It was too late. The chef d'artillerie was killed on his piece, and all the men who tried to prevent its capture. The rout was complete. Two cannon and ten wagon-loads of provisions were abandoned. The blacks pressed on, exploded the caissons, killed many, and the troops did not rally till they were beneath the cannon of Aux Cayes.

Rochambeau afterwards forced this defile, and took an intrenched camp of the negroes. In intrenching themselves they had recourse to the knowledge of whites, either French or Spanish, who favored them.

Under Toussaint 'Ouverture the blacks began to be disciplined. "It was remarkable to see the Africans, half naked, with musket and sabre, giving an example of the severest discipline. They went out for a campaign with nothing to eat but maize, established themselves in the towns, without touching anything exposed for sale in the shops, nor pillaging the farmers who brought things to market. Supple and trembling before their officers, respectful to citizens," they seemed only to wish to obey the instinct for liberty which was inspired in them by Toussaint.

This was at the period when they began to see clearly that nothing but the destruction of the French could secure their freedom.

Toussaint's army was brigaded and organized after the French fashion, but was composed of only 20,650 men, all of whom, but 1500, chiefly mulattoes, were blacks.

His principal place of defence, where he had stored great quantities of arms and munitions, was Crete-a Pierrot. The French thought they could take it by a coup de main, but were repulsed, and it had to be regularly invested, and approached by slow and painful efforts. It was bombarded from three quarters for two whole days; the garrison of 1200 made sorties with various success. The French lost 1500 men by these, and by the fire from the entrenchments. The blacks knew how to throw up new redoubts to menace the French approaches. A second attempt at carrying the place cost Rochambeau 300 men. At length the garrison retreated, losing less than half its number. La Croix says:—"The retreat which the commandant dared to conceive and execute was a remarkable feat of arms: We surrounded his post to the number of more than 12,000 men. He saved himself, did not lose half his garrison, and left us nothing but his dead and wounded. This man was a quarteroon, named Lamartiniere, chef de brigade, to whom nature had given a mind of the strongest stamp. He was the same man who headed the resistance of Port au Prince against the divisions of Boudet, and who, in full council of war broke the head of Lacombe, a commandant of artillery."

Toussaint himself made one or two attacks upon the investing force, and when the place was entered, he had fallen back to cut the communication between the attacking troops and the army in the North. He was so far successful that Hardy's division, in forcing its way through, became only a crowd of fugitives, having lost 500 men.

La Croix devotes a good many pages to the affair of Crete-a-Pierrot, and unreservedly expresses his admiration of the blacks; adding, however, that in general *they know how to defend better than to attack.*

This is true of a great many other people—the Turks, even under Omar Pacha, along the Danube, in the opening scenes of the Crimean war, could defend their entrenchments against every effort of the Russians, and they had only common open earthworks, with a shallow ditch.

It is plain that the negroes must be inspired with some sentiment or passion before they can fight. In this respect they are like the colder people of the North. And they must have some expectation or idea strong enough to hold them together and create an esprit de corps. It will not be possible to subject them to sustained discipline and to all the various fortunes of war unless they can feel that in fighting for their own personal safety they are fighting for their race—to be better off in the future—to enjoy some emolument or advantages—in fine, to be the owners of the blood and muscle which they are induced to expend for government.

And when that is clearly understood by them, the government will wield its most potent arm in the Southern States. There will be no lack of laborers and soldiers on the strength of a proclamation, conceived in good faith, and not disavowed by the Executive.

The history of Hayti shows that the Blacks will go with enthusiasm wherever they are led, by whites or by men of their own color, provided their steps never point again in the direction of slavery. Their stolid indifference vanishes when they have once got rid of the restraint of tyranny: they willingly incur the restraints of freedom to preserve their new position towards mankind.

J. W.